

Bodmin Landscape Project 1999 - Diary.

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13/06/99

EXCAVATION: Excavated just outside the main hut circle, across a section. Worked under Mike Seager who tried to explain the site complexity. Hopefully in a couple of days I'll understand it!

THE SITE: It is beautifully set, but quite hard to excavate. At least it was sunny! It is very windy and I got completely covered in dirt. I also got sunburned. The hike to the site was very hard, especially when walking up Leskernik Hill.

PEOPLE: There does seem to be a distinct divide between the archaeologists and the anthropologists, which I don't understand. Everyone is happy, except some people find Richard hard to work under, but I haven't yet, so I'll wait to make my judgement.

INTERPRETATION: Everything is very confusing, I have not got 'my eye' on the stones. Hopefully the Site tour tomorrow with Sue Hamilton will clear things up.

14/06/99

EXCAVATION: Worked in the trench nr. Hut 39 trying to find the Rab. There is a large gully running through the trench. Chris made everything very clear and often stopped to help us.

THE SITE: We had a site tour with Sue Hamilton, which was good. She showed us the stone row and its relationship with the different Tors surrounding it, like Roughtor. I am not as convinced, but this maybe due to the fact I haven't actually walked the Stone Row or been to Roughtor. I also believe that the use of the term ritual or spiritual is over-used as it is ~~too~~ implausible for us in the world we live in today to place such important labels on a world we will never understand or experience.

PEOPLE: Because of the weather everyone was quite cheerful today. As I haven't experienced the ~~at~~ torrential rain I can't only sympathize.

15/06/99

EXCAVATION: Worked again in Chris' trench, which I am really enjoying. He explains clearly what we are doing, why and the expected results. We have started to take off the peat and trowel down to the black 'greasy' layer. It is really good that I can be involved in trench work from an early stage. I want to stay in this trench, because it is very exciting and I am getting a 'feel' for this trench and its position in the landscape.

THE SITE: The trench tour in the morning was good as it helped to bring all of the evidence from the trenches together. That combined with the Site Tour has meant that I am now beginning to understand how the site works and how unique the excavation actually is.

16/06/99

EXCAVATION: Because of planning time, Tanya and I had to move to Richard's trench to help de-turf. He left us to do it, because he is concentrating on his other trench, even though there is nothing in it. We also had to work without Rosalind, because she was suffering from heatstroke.

THE SITE: In the sunshine Leokemik Hill is very beautiful and I spent a lot of my time looking around the Hill, rather than just the trenches. The enclosures are becoming more apparent and I can see the way in which the two settlements are separated. I still get lost trying to find the toolshed or the lunch hut!

17/06/99

EXCAVATION: Today we were removing the 'greasy black' layer, which would hopefully contain some finds. This is because it is in this layer that the other artefacts have been found. Although finds

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aren't the 'be all and end all' of an excavation, they ~~must~~ do boost morale because they are recognised evidence. Ken and Tess found some slate, which was probably a cutting surface or a roof.

18/06/99.

OUR DAY OFF - Yippee! I was so tired, so this day off is very welcome. We're going on one of Nigel's Mystery Tours to Tintagel, Boscastle and Bude. It was really nice to get away from the site, but still be with friends from the dig. It was good for people to get away from the trench pressures.

Rosalind has decided to leave the dig, whilst I respect her decision it does feel a little like betrayal, especially as she had to leave after enjoying the nice weather.

19/06/99.

Today was our first day of bad weather! I woke up and it was really horrible. The walk up the hill was quite hard, but apparently the rain wasn't as bad as it has been. The morning's work went quite well and it didn't really rain. After lunch we had to go further down as the layer we believed to be the ancient landsurface was just peat! So it means that ^{when} it is supposed to really rain tomorrow it'll be quite difficult to see the different sedimentological layer.

20/06/99.

It was really raining this morning and for the first time I did not want to go up the hill, but I was determined. I think the main problem was that the rain kept me awake. Luckily it had stopped raining by the time we reached Westmoorgate. Throughout the day the sun shone.

Excavation was quite good today as we finally reached the right sedimentological layer. Tomorrow it'll be planned and photographed, so we may have to move trenches, I hope not!

21/6/99 - Summer solstice.

I gave Patrick my question today:-

"When you are off the hill and you think of Leskernick, what comes to mind?"

I hope that this will produce answers which are not obvious.

Although I still think of stones!

Excavation was good today as I helped out on Gary's trench, a wall section, which was very different to the trenches I am working on. All of the stones had to remain as they helped to show how it was constructed.

22/6/99.

Had a site tour this morning and discussed the wall entrances. Sue was talking about the differences between her opinions about the entrances and the surveyors' opinions. There are a lot of gaps in the walls and many have been designated as entrances. It seems to be the presence of inturns that signifies an entrance.

In the evening, after a days digging, we went to Attarnun Church Hall to the end of exhibition 'discussion'. ~~At~~ To be honest, the exhibition meant very little to me, especially as I was very tired. Sue's and Chris' talks just reiterated what we all knew. It seemed that many of people outside the project had arrived with their own agendas, especially the Commeners and the Ramblers Association. I am quite glad that I managed to get away before the group was split up as Marian (fellow caravanner) came in at 10.00pm. I thought the exhibition was very well done, but it was not appreciated how tired the excavators are; mentally and physically after a day at Leskernick.

23/6/99

I was very tired today and really struggled to get up, especially as it was raining! Today's excavation was completely different to the last couple of days of careful

trowelling. We took out a lot of stones that were wall tumble from Hut 39, which changed the look of the trench from very stony to quite empty. The lack of finds and features is quite frustrating. Tomorrow is my last day and although I want to go home I will miss everyone.

24/6/99

The excavation today highlighted the contradictions that exist + are necessary to complete a trench. After spending days carefully trowelling down to find each sedimentological layer and looking for finds, today we were mattocking down inches to find the natural (Rab). After carefully trowelling and sieving to try and find some flint or slate it was Andrew Mayfield who discovered our first official small find after mattocking! The trench also looked very different. I had begun to get to know the stones in the trench and began to see patterns. However once the main stones had been removed and also the smaller ones I was thrown into confusion. The trench had lost its familiarity and it was like my first couple of days. After two weeks I felt momentarily that I had not learnt or become comfortable with the stones. But upon reflection I have learnt a lot on this unique excavation and although I have only been here for two weeks I will truly miss Leskernick and the community we've established here at the Holiday Park.

25/6/99.

I revisited Tintagel and Boscastle today with Don, Liz, Aaron, Tom and Connor. At Tintagel we spoke to the Glasgow University excavators about their excavations. They were complaining about the 'hike' to the site, which compared to the walk to ~~the~~ Leskernick is a stroll in the park! It had made

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we realise how significant the walk to Leskernick actually is; physically and mentally. We also went to Padstow, which was very beautiful, a true seaside town. It'll be a nice memory to take we me.